

TRUMP'S FIRST QUARTER: A FACT SHEET

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2026 has brought the end of meaningful guardrails on Trump's imperial vision of the presidency. At home, liberal institutions are breaking under his sustained assault on civil liberties and democratic norms, while economic pressures mount on working class Americans. Abroad, the Trump administration's military aggression has devastated countries from Venezuela to Iran. This fact sheet documents the human cost.

IMMIGRATION AND ICE

The humanitarian costs of detaining and deporting immigrants by the Trump Administration has reached unprecedented levels. Rivalling the prison-industrial complex, 68,000 people have been detained by February. Trump plans to spend 38 billion turning warehouses into detention complexes. To fill quotas, ICE have violently raided homes without judicial warrant, putting the lives of families and children at risk. Widespread reports of substandard care, lack of medical care and deaths in custody have been confirmed even by the Department of Homeland Security in their review into a detention camp in Texas.

ICE has also violently cracked down on peaceful protests following operation Metro Surge in Minneapolis leading to the murder of two American citizens. In January, Renne Good and Alex Peretti, two American citizens, were both shot and killed by federal Immigrations agents. Renee was shot and killed attempting to drive away from ICE officers canvassing her car, and Alex was shot and killed after being pepper sprayed and tackled to the ground, while protecting a protestor from violent arrest.

ICE has become Trump's personal army, with the potential to undermine other aspect society and American democracy. Former Whitehouse Advisor Steve Bannon suggested on his War Room podcast that ICE's recent deployment to airports is a test run" to "really perfect ICE's involvement in the 2025 midterm elections."

TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

The Trump Administration has undermined the trust of Americans by again delaying the release of the Epstein Files. On November 19 th , 2025, President Trump signed into law the Epstein Transparency Act , which was intended to "produce all documents, files, records, videos and images related to the investigations and prosecutions of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislane Maxwell ."

TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY CONTINUED

However, this act also had “a few exceptions, “which NPR describes as “more than 50 pages of FBI interviews.” This kind of cover-up from the Trump Administration contributes to the diminishing trust within the nation in the current administration. As of a December 2025 poll released by the Pew Research Center, 17% percent of Americans have trust in the federal government to do the right thing just about always or most of the time, which marks the lowest public trust percentage since March 2019 during Trump’s first term in office.

ECONOMIC

In his State of the Union address, Trump declared that the affordability crisis was “over”, claiming prices were “plummeting downward.” Data tells a different story. Electricity is up 6.3% compared to the same time last year, healthcare premiums are expected to rise over 100% for millions of enrollees, and grocery prices have grown faster than overall inflation since 2020.

On tariffs, the administration maintains that foreign exporters bear the cost. However, according to a February 2026 New York Federal Reserve report, as much as 90% of the tariff burden has landed on American firms and consumers. The average tariff rate on U.S. imports rose from 2.6% to 13% across 2025, and major corporations like Nike, Levi’s, and BMW have signaled there are more price increases ahead. For lower income households that spend nearly 90% of their income on basic necessities like groceries, utilities, healthcare, transportation and shelter, the effects of tariffs are even more dire. In addition, business confidence has been shaken by unpredictable and constant changes.

Beyond the humanitarian crisis triggered by the bombing of Iran, the potential energy shock stemming from damage to Iran’s infrastructure and a possible closure of the Strait of Hormuz could severely disrupt global supply chains and the U.S. economy.

Beyond the humanitarian crisis sparked by bombing Iraq, the unrealized energy shock resulting from the destruction Iran’s infrastructure and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz will likely wreak havoc on global supply chains and the U.S. economy.

HEALTHCARE

Republicans have refused to extend the enhanced subsidies in the Affordable House Care Act, which expired in January 2026. As a direct result, insurance premiums for many Americans rose, while The Congressional Budget Office predicts that up to 4 million Americans will shortly lose coverage. Trump's alternative “Great Healthcare Plan”, intended to lower drug costs and insurance premiums, is not only scant on details and unlike to pass the senate, it is also much narrower in scope than the ACA.

HEALTHCARE CONTINUED

HHS Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr declared a new set of federal dietary guidelines, as part of the Trump Administration's Make America Healthy Again campaign. The new “inverted pyramid” promotes red meat, animal fats and whole foods, while whole grains are pushed to the bottom of the pyramid. Plant proteins and legumes are entirely absent.

This emphasis on red meat, which has been linked with increased health risks (such as cardiovascular disease, several cancers, and type 2 diabetes) for over a decade, raises serious concerns. Meanwhile, necessary nutrients such as legumes, seeds, and nuts are left out of the new guidelines, all which can contribute to lowering the risks of these diseases, alongside containing their own protein and healthy fats. Additionally, red meat consumption has a devastating effect on our environment, worsening deforestation and increasing greenhouse gases.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The second Trump administration hammered the final nail in the coffin of American Exceptionalism. Gone is the idea that the U.S. is not only a powerful nation, but also a model of liberty. Instead of a combining hard and soft power, the administration has ended its support for humanitarianism and embraced nakedly aggressive unilateralism. Trump threatened to seize Greenland by force, aggravating Denmark and other NATO members, before taking back the threat. On February 28th, the United States and Israel launched joint military strikes on Iran with the stated goal of regime change, an action that international law expert Marc Weller described as a “major step in unhinging the global order.” Trump’s threats to bomb Iran “back to the stone ages” and destroy “a whole civilization ” reflects his unhinged vision of an imperial presidency intent on committing war crimes in this historical cradle of civilization.

The large-scale strikes targeted Iranian military assets and the Islamic Republic’s top leadership, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Alu Khamenei. In retaliation, Iran launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles at targets in Ireal and at U.S. military bases across the region. Preliminary figures put the death toll at nearly 2,000 in Iran. U.S. support for Israeli expansion of the war into Lebanon is displacing thousands and bringing untold suffering to the region.

The Trump administration’s first quarter of 2026 has marked a dramatic shift in America’s global posture from humanitarian leader to military aggressor. Medical teams have lost access to providing aid in Gaza, the West Bank, Yemen, Syria, and Ukraine. For example, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was providing HIV treatment to an estimated 680,000 pregnant women. A 90-day stoppage could lead to an estimated 136,000 babies acquiring HIV. Additionally, a study published by the Lancet claims that global aid cuts could lead to 9.4 million deaths by 2030.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONTINUED

In Gaza, while Trump arranged a ceasefire and pledged to put \$10 billion toward reconstruction at an inaugural Board of Peace summit, the reality on ground tells a different story. With the dismantle of USAID, aid deliveries into Gaza continue to fall far short of the 500 to 600 trucks of aid to enter Gaza daily called for under the US-arranged ceasefire.

EDUCATION

One of Trump's main goals from the beginning of his administration was to eliminate the Department of Education, putting in place Linda McMahon (wife of World Wrestling Entertainment cofounder Vince McMahon) as the Secretary of Education. Her sole goal as head of the department is to dismantle her own department, with massive funding cuts and shifting of programs. Trump announced a 12 billion dollar budget cut for the 2026 fiscal year, alongside consolidating the K-12 programs into one grant, cutting 4.5 billion from those programs alone. This amount will devastate education policy delivery while amounting to merely a rounding error in comparison to the proposed budget of over 1 trillion dollars for the Department of Defense. This is a 13 percent increase from 2025, and includes a whopping 175 billion to supposedly "fully secure the border," an unfulfilled promise that Trump has emphasized since his first term in office.

The Trump administration has proposed further sweeping cuts to science and education funding, which will decimate the U.S. stance as a scientific leader and lead to serious "brain drain."

FREE SPEECH AND MEDIA

In the guise of protecting freedom of speech, Trump has begun policing both words and education, through executive orders such as "Ending the Weaponization of the Federal Government" and "Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling." In addition, the administration has continued to prevent newsgathering and journalism through his own anti-speech campaign, which includes simply filing lawsuits and pushing aggressive statements detailing a "perceived enemy's" apparent wrongdoing.

Trump made repeated attempts to control political speech in media, taking a particular interest in talk shows since the suspension of Jimmy Kimmel. This quarter, Trump targeted popular, late-night talk show host Stephen Colbert. Colbert was set to host Democratic Senate candidate James Talerico on his show, but the interview was pulled by CBS, citing potential legal and regulatory guidance issues. These issues referred to the Communication Act of 1934, which allows the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to force networks to give equal time to political candidates from both parties. However, this rule, while broad, is not usually applied to talk shows. Using these powers, the FCC and Brendan Carr (Trump-appointed chairman of the FCC) continues to restrict free speech and shape their own political agenda on the air.

FREE SPEECH AND MEDIA CONTINUED

To further their control on the air and through the media, Trump built many relationships with media and tech moguls. One such mogul is David Ellison, son of Trump ally and tech billionaire Larry Ellison. Trump helped out the Ellison's by supporting their expensive takeover bids for Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery, as well as promoting and paying dividends to Oracle, Larry's software company. This connection is just one of many that Trump has formed with billionaires and major companies, including Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman and Foris Dax (parent company of Crypto.com).

DEMOCRACY AND VOTING

In February 2026, the SAVE Act passed the House of Representatives and awaits passage by the Senate. The Act requires voter registration applicants to provide proof of U.S. citizenship and identification documents other than Real ID. Applicants, such as trans people and married women who may have legally changed their names face additional barriers to voting because the act requires that voters without a passport present a birth certificate matching their name on their Real ID.

This is a textbook case of disenfranchisement that, of course, benefits the Trump administration's fate in the 2026 Midterm elections. Without completely barring eligible voters from exercising their right to vote, the SAVE act would establish unnecessary barriers to voting that disproportionately harm the marginalized— groups that lean heavily Democratic. Black Americans, for instance, voted for Kamala Harris over Donald Trump by 83% in the 2024 presidential election. Black voters, not coincidentally, are disproportionately represented among those without passports or documentation to satisfy the SAVE Act requirements.

ENVIRONMENT

U.S. president Donald J. Trump is attempting to dismantle federal climate policy and evade responsibility for our small and changing planet. Trump withdrew from the Paris Climate agreement for the second time on January 27, 2026, stymieing collective global efforts to address the climate emergency.

On February 12th, Trump and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin announced the repeal of the Endangerment finding for Greenhouse Gases. This landmark U.S. legal and scientific finding recognized that greenhouse gases are a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of Americans and accordingly can be regulated by the EPA. The repeal of the Endangerment finding may prove to be the most consequential of Trump's climate rollbacks if it survives the legal challenges. Multiple organizations, including the American Lung Association and the American Public Health Association, have announced their intentions to sue. During the public comment period, over 572,000 responses were registered, a reminder of public concern is not solitary.